



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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September 15, 2011  
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# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AWARDS IDAHO SCHOOLS AS NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

BOISE – Three Idaho schools have been named among the most prestigious in the nation for academic achievement, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced today.

Homedale Middle School in Homedale, Southside Elementary School in Cocolalla, and Ponderosa Elementary School in Post Falls all have been awarded as 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools. The Idaho State Department of Education nominated these schools for the National Blue Ribbon School award, which honors public and private schools where students achieve at high levels or where the achievement gap is narrowing.

“I am proud of each of these schools, the teachers, the students, and the parents. Despite challenges they may face, they have put students first and raised academic achievement year after year,” Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said. “These schools are examples to their peers across the state and country of what is possible.”

The U.S. Department of Education awarded selected 305 schools across the country to receive the award this year. Each school will receive a \$20,000 award to further their work at the school and will be honored at an awards ceremony November 14-15 in Washington, D.C. The Idaho State Department of Education will create a video highlighting each school’s achievements and share their best practices with other schools across Idaho.

Here are highlights of each school and why they received the National Blue Ribbon School Award:

**Homedale Middle School, Homedale:** Homedale Middle School is recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for the academic growth students have made in recent years. Student proficiency has increased by 34 percent in reading and by 30 percent in mathematics. Homedale Middle School attributes its success to the culture of high expectations it has created. The school offers opportunities such as robotics, pre-engineering, career explorations, honors English, and advanced mathematics.

**Southside Elementary School, Cocolalla:** Southside Elementary School is recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for the academic growth students have made in recent years. Student proficiency has increased by 30 percent in reading and by 7 percent in mathematics. The school attributes its student achievement gains in part to a before-school tutoring program it set up for students who struggle. Because of the school’s remote location, many students arrive at school early, and staff has learned how to utilize this time to best meet student needs.

**Ponderosa Elementary School, Post Falls:** Ponderosa Elementary School is recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for its continued high performance. At Ponderosa, 98 percent of students are proficient in reading and 94 percent are proficient in mathematics. The school attributes its success to focused professional development, a supportive learning environment, clear student learning targets that are aligned to instruction, and frequent monitoring of student progress through assessments.

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